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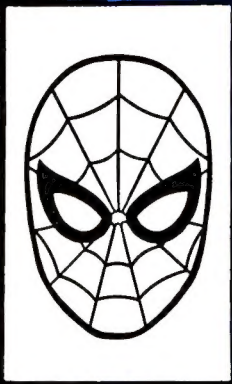
X FACTOR



**FOUR
LIVES COME
TOGETHER--**

**...AS ONE BEGINS TO
CRUMBLE!**

Shawmaker & McGrom '90



MANHATTAN--
MOODIEST ISLAND
IN THE WORLD.

THROUGH DARKEST OF NIGHT IT NEVER
SLEEPS BUT OFFERS ITSELF TO ALL
COMERS, GLITTERING, DECKED IN LIGHTS,
SEDUCTIVE WITH A DANGEROUS, WANTON CHARM.

AND YET, EACH MORNING,
IT RISES LIKE A MIRACLE,
FRESH, RENEWED AND
SPLENDID AS A YET-
UNBROKEN PROMISE.

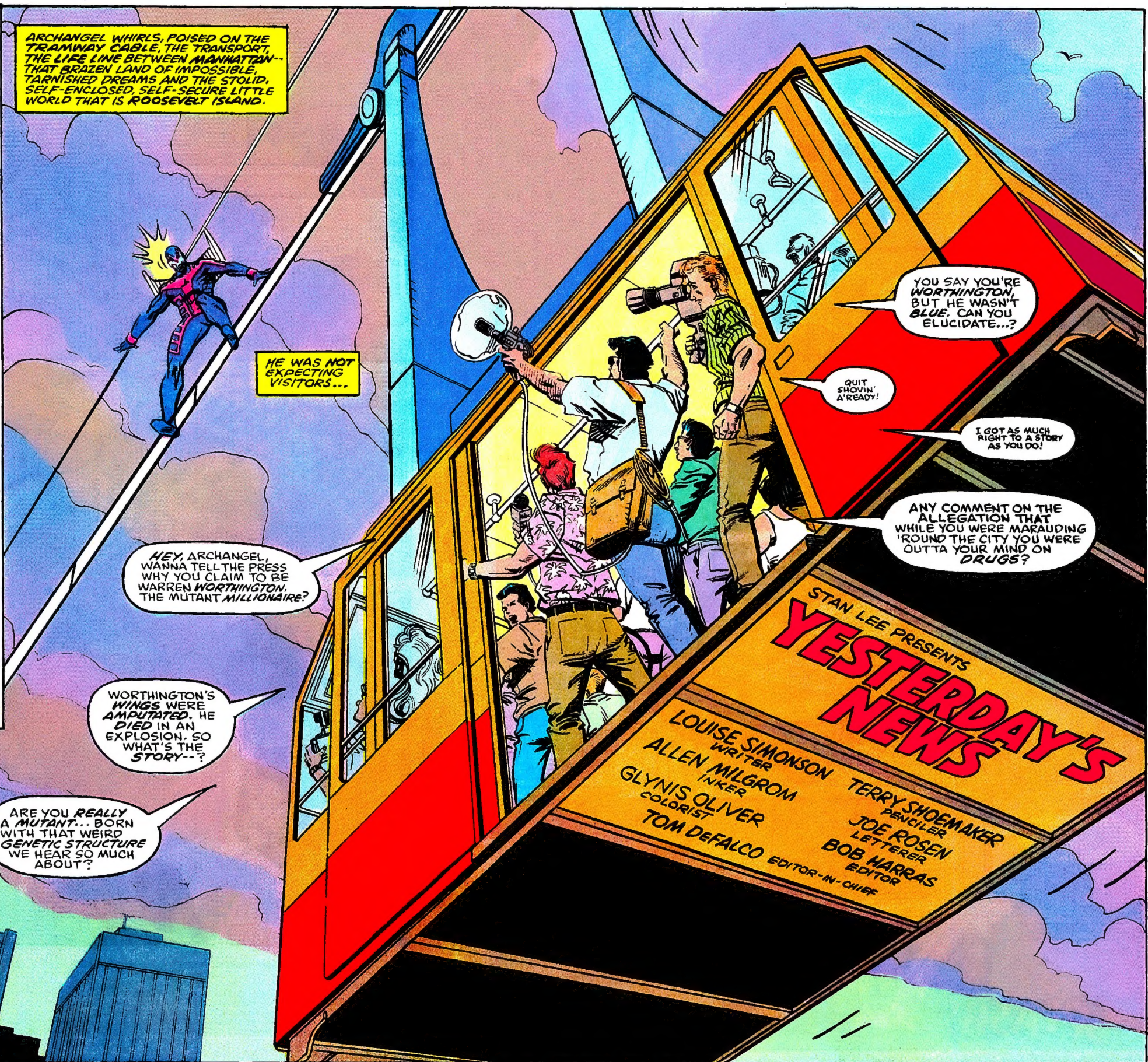
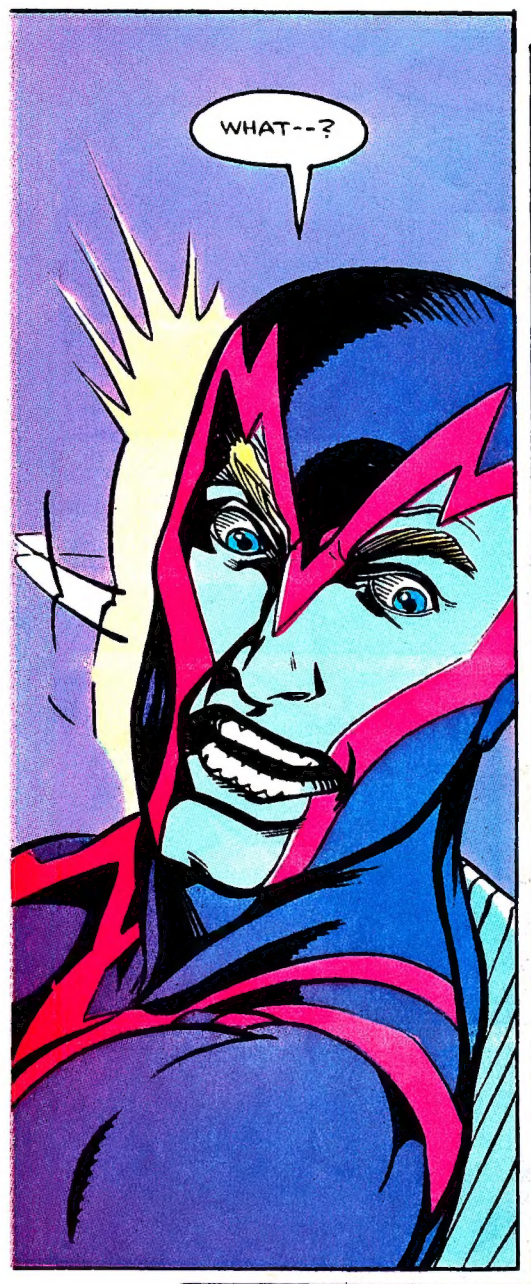
BUT NOW THE CITY, IN
A LESS-LOVING MOOD,
CROUCHES, ANGRY AND
CLOUD-SHROUDED, ABOVE
THE CHOPPY WATERS OF
THE EAST RIVER, SULLEN
AND TREACHEROUS...

X-FACTOR:
HEROES or MENACE?

GARBAGE.

CRUNCH!

HEY--
ARCHANGEL!



ARCHANGEL WHIRLS, POISED ON THE TRAMWAY CABLE, THE TRANSPORT, THE LIFE LINE BETWEEN MANHATTAN-- THAT BRAZEN LAND OF IMPOSSIBLE, TARNISHED DREAMS AND THE STOLID, SELF-ENCLOSED, SELF-SECURE LITTLE WORLD THAT IS ROOSEVELT ISLAND.

HE WAS NOT EXPECTING VISITORS...

HEY, ARCHANGEL, WANNA TELL THE PRESS WHY YOU CLAIM TO BE WARREN WORTHINGTON, THE MUTANT MILLIONAIRE?

WORTHINGTON'S WINGS WERE AMPUTATED. HE DIED IN AN EXPLOSION. SO WHAT'S THE STORY--?

ARE YOU REALLY A MUTANT... BORN WITH THAT WEIRD GENETIC STRUCTURE WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT?

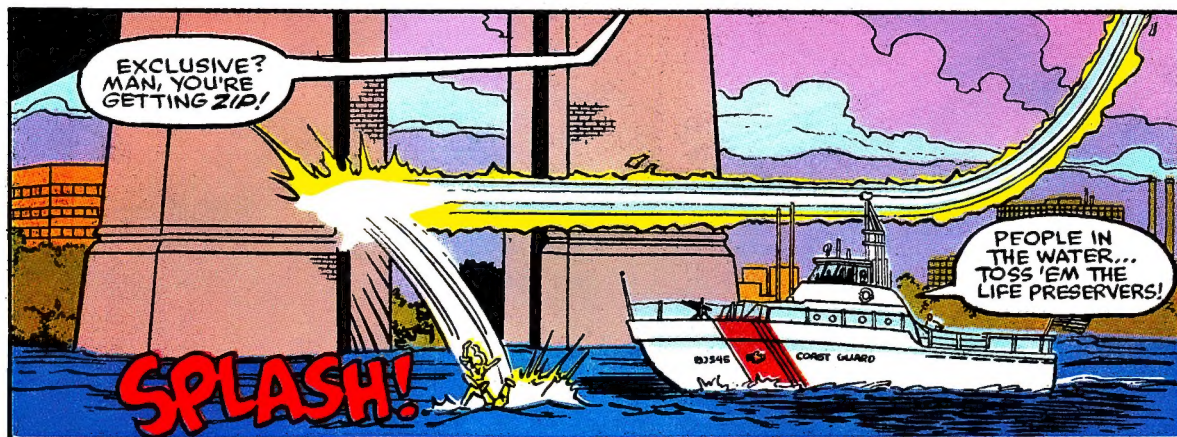
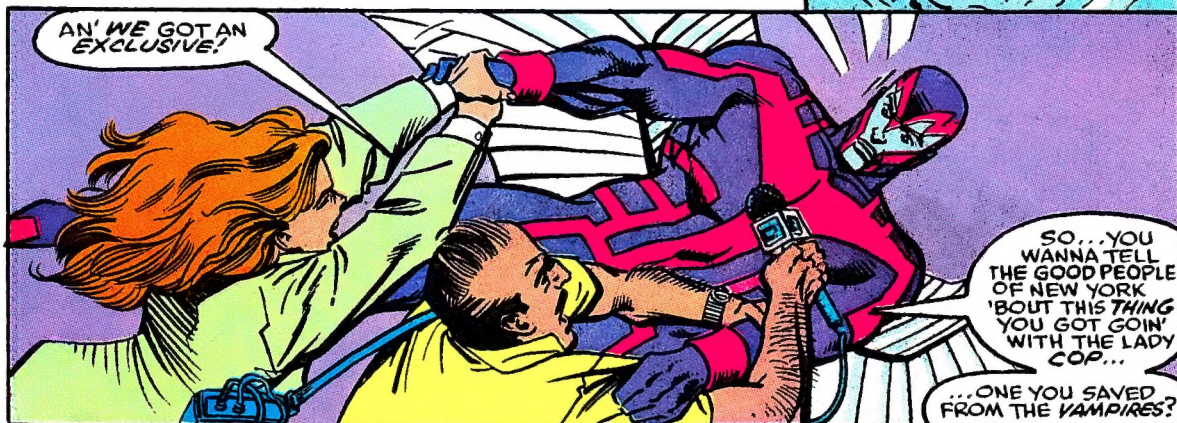
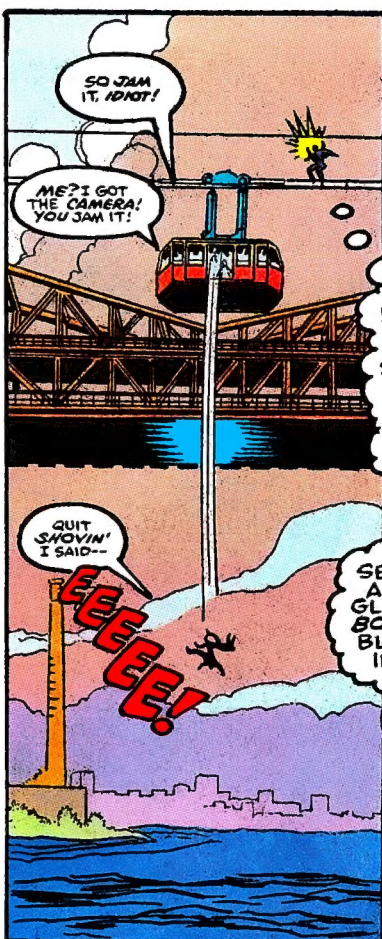
YOU SAY YOU'RE WORTHINGTON, BUT HE WASN'T BLUE. CAN YOU ELUCIDATE...?

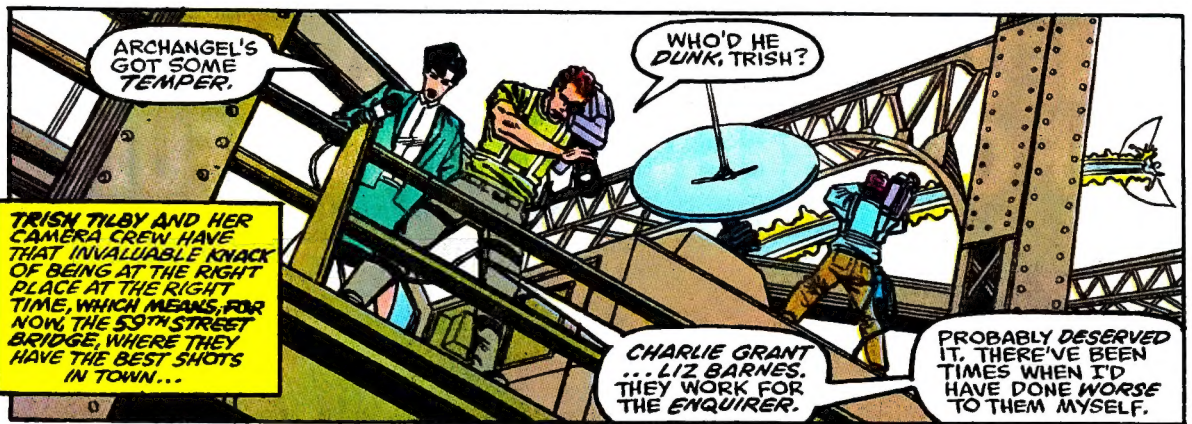
QUIT SHOVIN' A' READY!

I GOT AS MUCH RIGHT TO A STORY AS YOU DO!

ANY COMMENT ON THE ALLEGATION THAT WHILE YOU WERE MARAUDING 'ROUND THE CITY YOU WERE OUTTA YOUR MIND ON DRUGS?

STAN LEE PRESENTS
YESTERDAY'S NEWS
LOUISE SIMONSON WRITER
ALLEN MILGROM INKER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
TERRY SHOEMAKER PENCILER
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
BOB HARRAS EDITOR





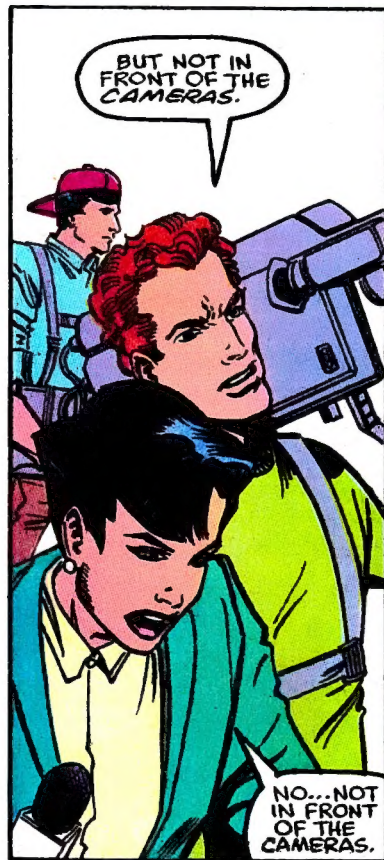
TRISH TILBY AND HER CAMERA CREW HAVE THAT INVALUABLE KNACK OF BEING AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, WHICH MEANS, FOR NOW, THE 59TH STREET BRIDGE, WHERE THEY HAVE THE BEST SHOTS IN TOWN...

ARCHANGEL'S GOT SOME TEMPER.

WHO'D HE DUNK, TRISH?

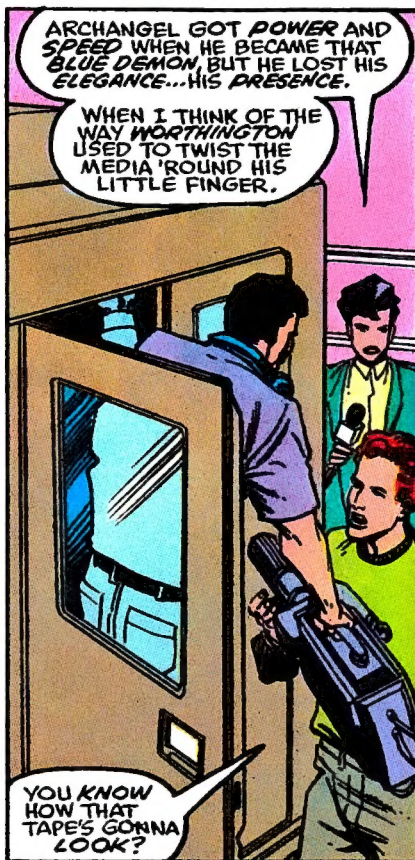
CHARLIE GRANT... LIZ BARNES. THEY WORK FOR THE ENQUIRER.

PROBABLY DESERVED IT. THERE'VE BEEN TIMES WHEN I'D HAVE DONE WORSE TO THEM MYSELF.



BUT NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS.

NO... NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS.



ARCHANGEL GOT POWER AND SPEED WHEN HE BECAME THAT BLUE DEMON, BUT HE LOST HIS ELEGANCE... HIS PRESENCE.

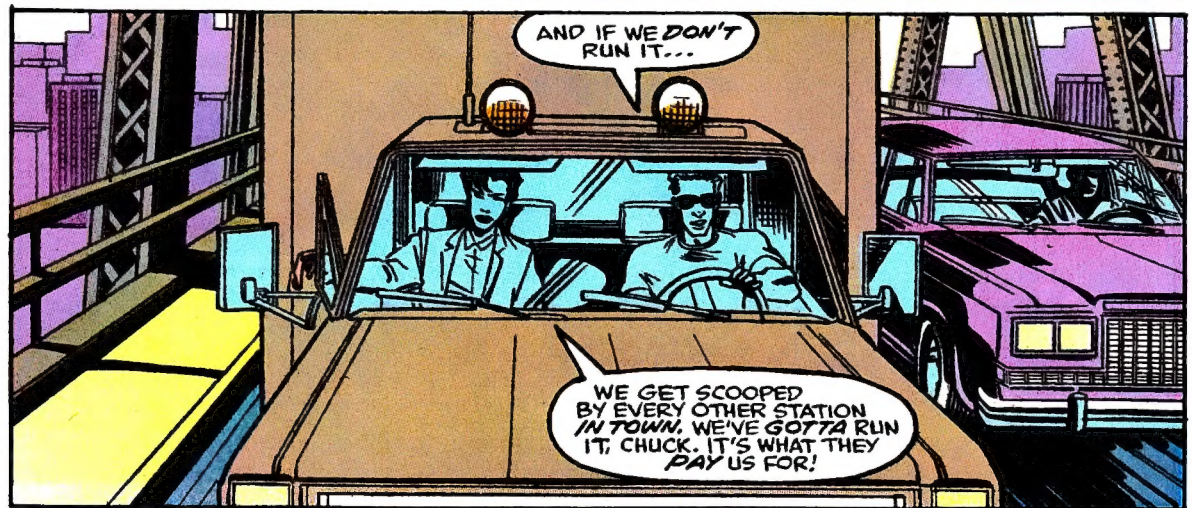
WHEN I THINK OF THE WAY WORTHINGTON USED TO TWIST THE MEDIA 'ROUND HIS LITTLE FINGER.

YOU KNOW HOW THAT TAPE'S GONNA LOOK?



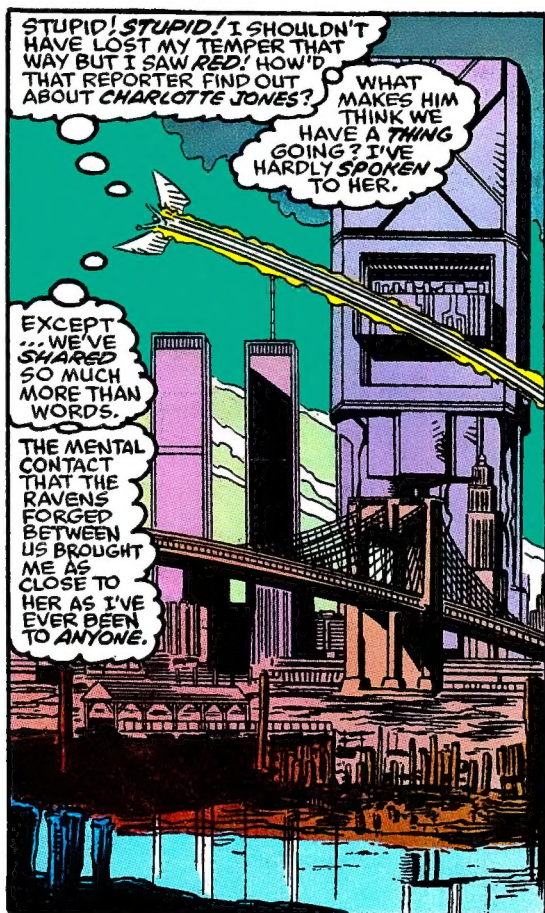
LIKE AN ASSAULT. NO MATTER HOW ELOQUENT THE VOICEOVER...

...OUR VIEWERS WILL SEE A BLUE-FACED HOMICIDAL MUTIE TRYING TO DROWN SOME INNOCENT HUMANS.



AND IF WE DON'T RUN IT...

WE GET SCOOPED BY EVERY OTHER STATION IN TOWN. WE'VE GOTTA RUN IT, CHUCK. IT'S WHAT THEY PAY US FOR!



STUPID! STUPID! I SHOULDN'T HAVE LOST MY TEMPER THAT WAY BUT I SAW RED! HOW'D THAT REPORTER FIND OUT ABOUT CHARLOTTE JONES?

WHAT MAKES HIM THINK WE HAVE A THING GOING? I'VE HARDLY SPOKEN TO HER.

EXCEPT... WE'VE SHARED SO MUCH MORE THAN WORDS.

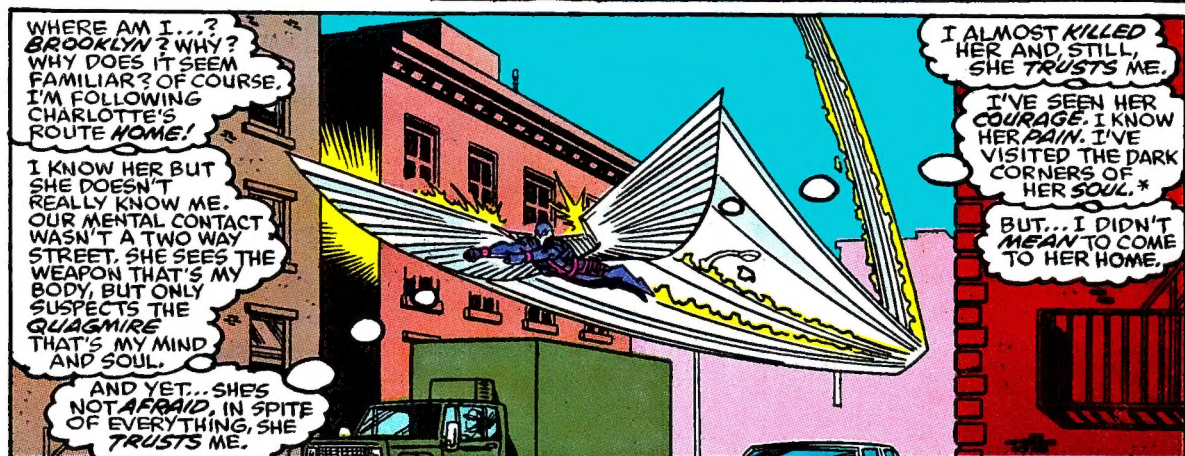
THE MENTAL CONTACT THAT THE RAVENS FORGED BETWEEN US BROUGHT ME AS CLOSE TO HER AS I'VE EVER BEEN TO ANYONE.

FLYING USED TO BRING ME PEACE, BUT NOW ALL I DO IS THINK THE SAME THOUGHTS, THOUGHTS OF PAIN AND LOSS.

LORD, I HOPE THOSE NEWS JOCKEYS DON'T START RIDING HER LIKE THEY'VE BEEN HOUNDING ME.

MY PARENTS... CANDY... BOTH GONE! MY BODY TRANSFORMED INTO THIS MOCKERY! SOMETIMES I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM MYSELF! IS IT THE DARK, BROODING ARCH-ANGEL OR MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY, GOOD OL' WARREN WORTHINGTON?

I'VE GOT TO STOP! MY MIND'S ON A TREADMILL!



WHERE AM I...? BROOKLYN? WHY? WHY DOES IT SEEM FAMILIAR? OF COURSE, I'M FOLLOWING CHARLOTTE'S ROUTE HOME!

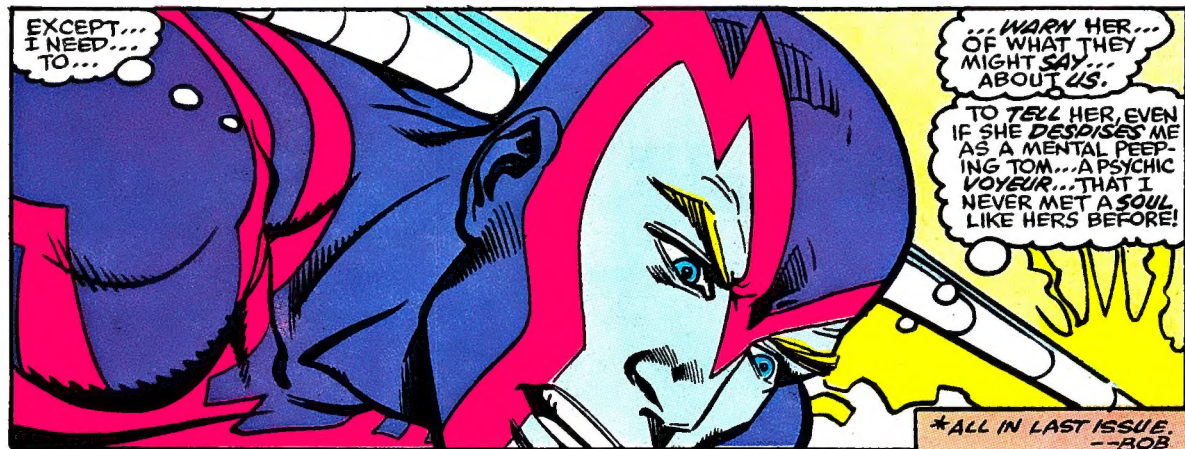
I KNOW HER BUT SHE DOESN'T REALLY KNOW ME. OUR MENTAL CONTACT WASN'T A TWO WAY STREET. SHE SEES THE WEAPON THAT'S MY BODY, BUT ONLY SUSPECTS THE QUAGMIRE THAT'S MY MIND AND SOUL.

AND YET... SHE'S NOT AFRAID, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, SHE TRUSTS ME.

I ALMOST KILLED HER AND STILL, SHE TRUSTS ME.

I'VE SEEN HER COURAGE. I KNOW HER PAIN. I'VE VISITED THE DARK CORNERS OF HER SOUL.*

BUT... I DIDN'T MEAN TO COME TO HER HOME.

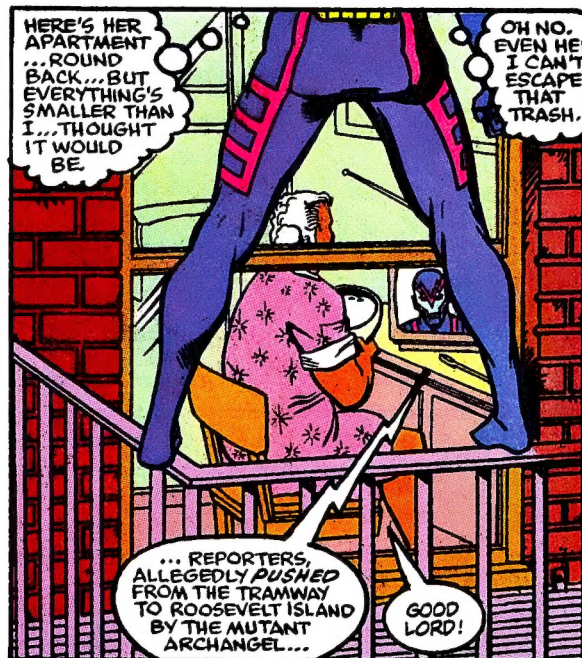


EXCEPT... I NEED... TO...

...WARN HER... OF WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY ABOUT US.

TO TELL HER, EVEN IF SHE DESPISES ME AS A MENTAL PEEP-ING TOM... A PSYCHIC VOYEUR... THAT I NEVER MET A SOUL LIKE HERS BEFORE!

*ALL IN LAST ISSUE.
--BOB



HERE'S HER APARTMENT...ROUND BACK...BUT EVERYTHING'S SMALLER THAN I...THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.

OH NO, EVEN HERE I CAN'T ESCAPE THAT TRASH...

...WERE RESCUED BY A PASSING YACHT...

EXCUSE ME...?

TAP! TAP!

...REPORTERS, ALLEGEDLY PUSHED FROM THE TRAMWAY TO ROOSEVELT ISLAND BY THE MUTANT ARCHANGEL...

GOOD LORD!



AN' JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOIN' HERE, MISTER HIGH AN' MIGHTY ARCHANGEL...

...DRAGGIN' MY GRANDSON'S MOTHER OUT INTO THE NIGHT... AFTER VAMPIRES YET...

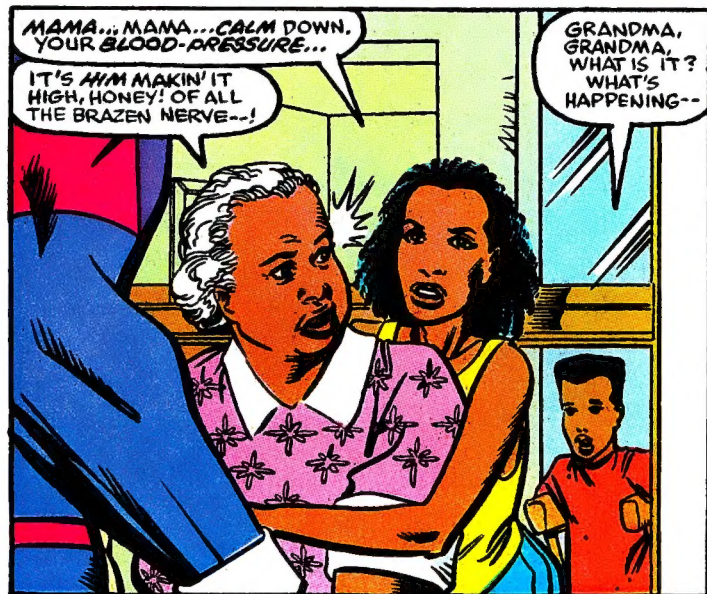


...AN' HER STILL IN HER NIGHTGOWN...! NOW DON'T YOU GO DENYIN' IT...

CHARLOTTE'S MOTHER-IN-LAW. SHE SEEMS SMALLER, TOO.

...I HEARD IT FROM HER OWN LIPS, AN' LITTLE TIMMY SCARED TA DEATH...

...WHY, IF I HADN'T BEEN HERE, HE--



MAMA... MAMA... CALM DOWN, YOUR BLOOD-PRESSURE...

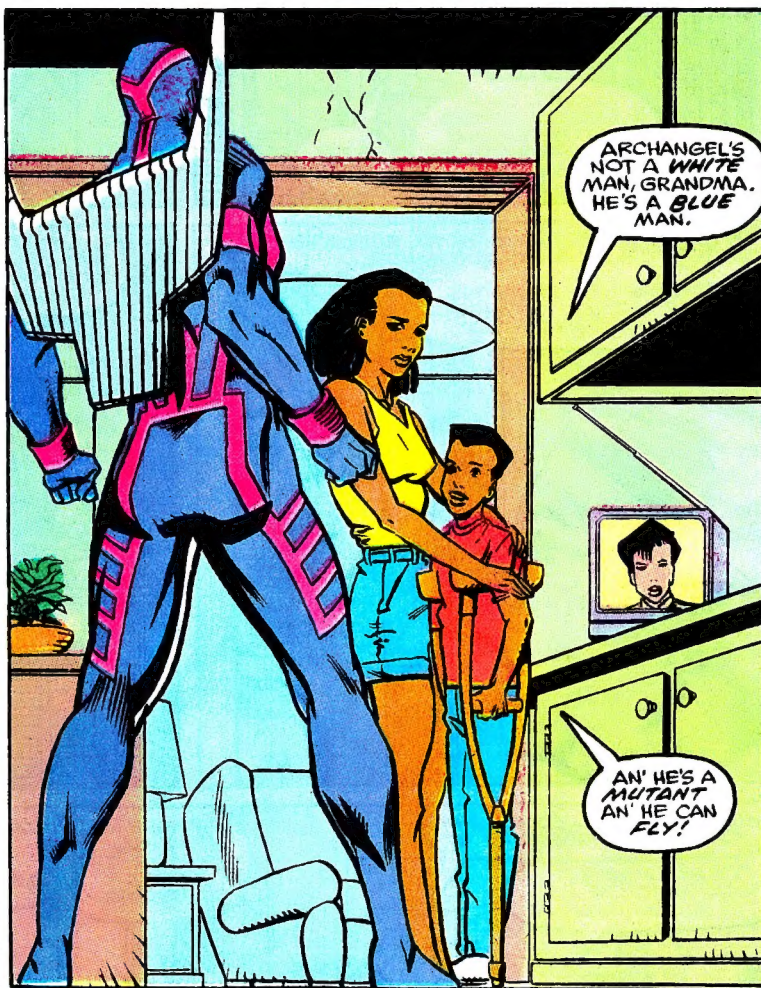
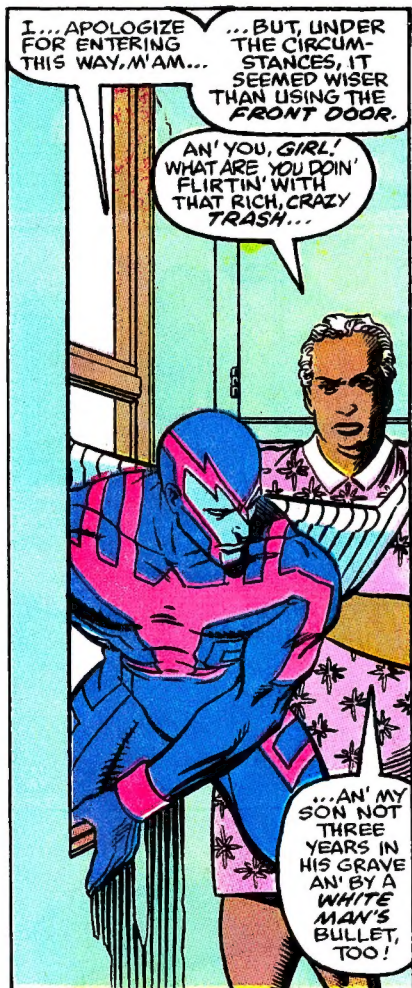
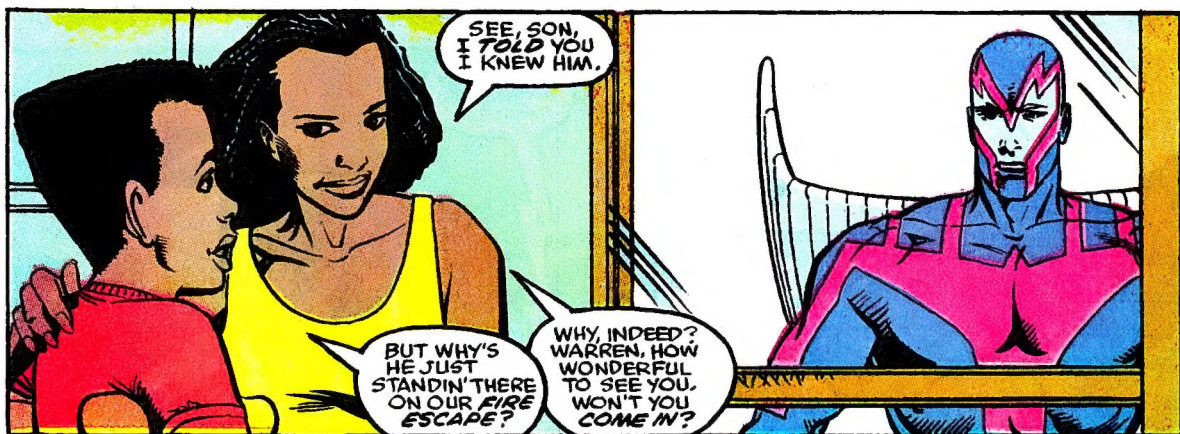
IT'S HIM MAKIN' IT HIGH, HONEY! OF ALL THE BRAZEN NERVE--!

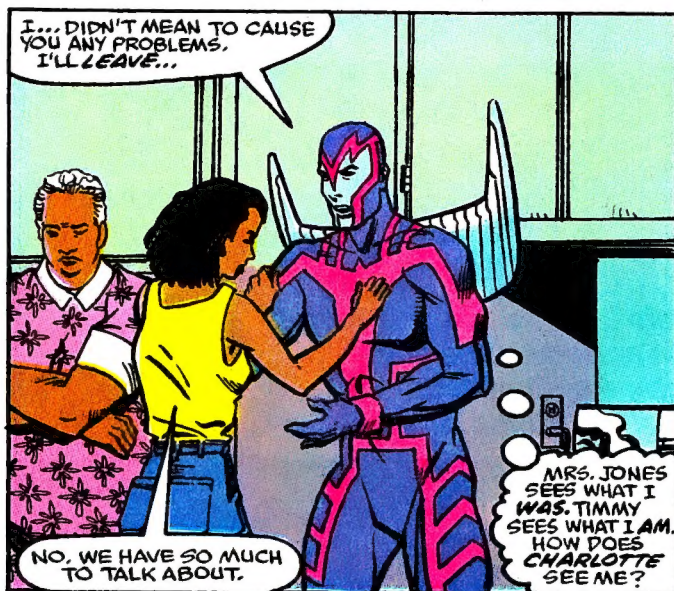
GRANDMA, GRANDMA, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING--



KAWABUNGA!

IT'S ARCHANGEL!





I... DIDN'T MEAN TO CAUSE YOU ANY PROBLEMS, I'LL LEAVE...

NO, WE HAVE SO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT.

MRS. JONES SEES WHAT I WAS. TIMMY SEES WHAT I AM. HOW DOES CHARLOTTE SEE ME?



YOU'RE SURE?

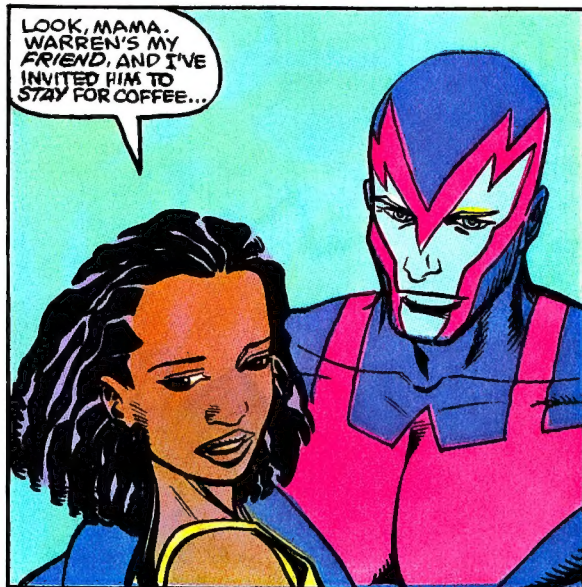
ALL RIGHT THEN, AND IF YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW CAN SEE ME AS A MAN AT ALL, CHARLOTTE, SHE'S WAY AHEAD OF MOST OF NEW YORK.



ARCHANGEL... OH, WOW! MAN, THE DUDES AT SCHOOL ARE NEVER GONNA BELIEVE THIS!

YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT 'BOUT THIS, YOU HEAR, BOY? THIS AN' THOSE VAMPIRE THINGS, TOO!

CHURCH FOLKS AIN'T GONNA UNDERSTAND AND IT AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS BUT OUR OWN ANYWAY...



LOOK, MAMA. WARREN'S MY FRIEND, AND I'VE INVITED HIM TO STAY FOR COFFEE...



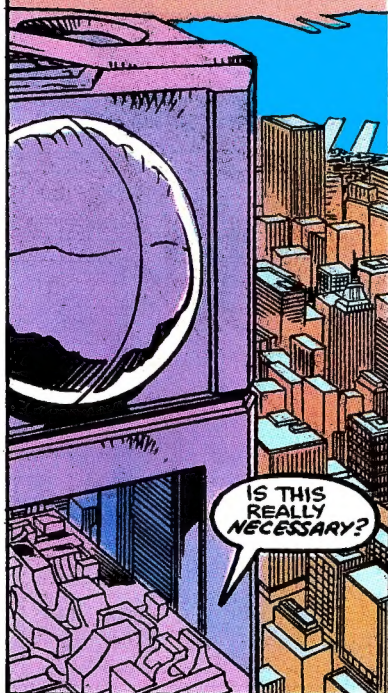
COFFEE, NOW, BUT ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER... I BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK MORE THAN ONCE AN' I GOT EYES TA SEE...

YEAH! AN' WE GOT CHOCOLATE MILK AN' DONUTS, TOO!

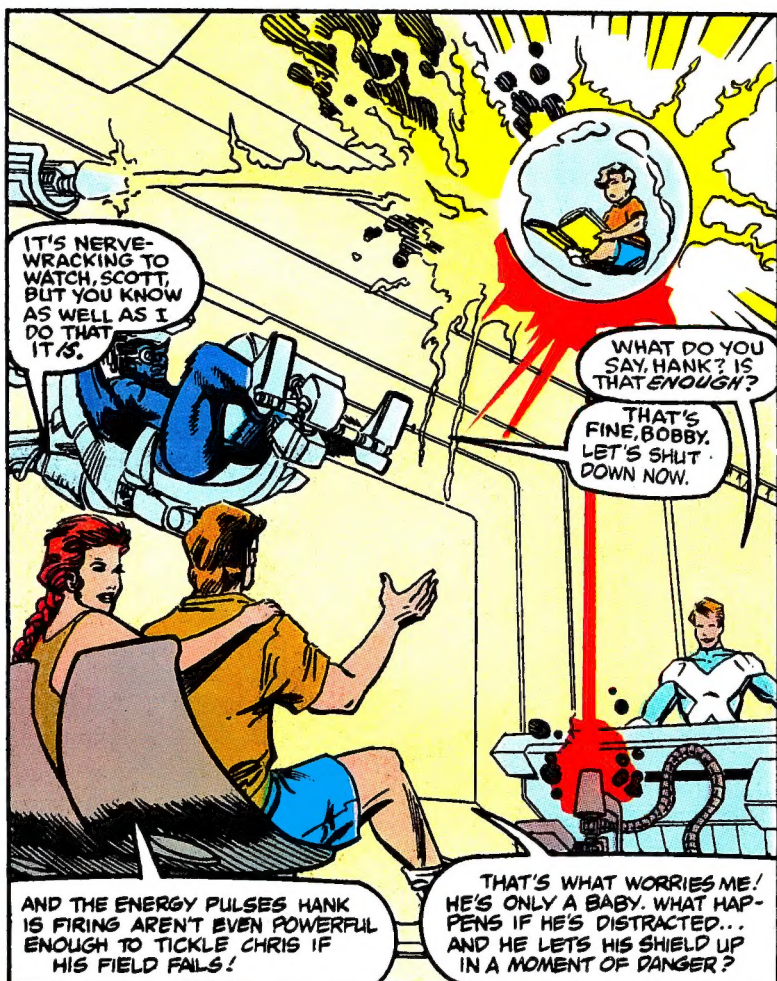
OH, WOW! ARCHANGEL!

X-FACTOR'S GIANT SENTIENT SHIP HOVERS OVER MANHATTAN'S SKYLINE LIKE A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

INSIDE ARE X-FACTOR'S OTHER MEMBERS, WHO, LIKE ARCHANGEL, WERE BORN WITH MUTANT ABILITIES...



IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY?



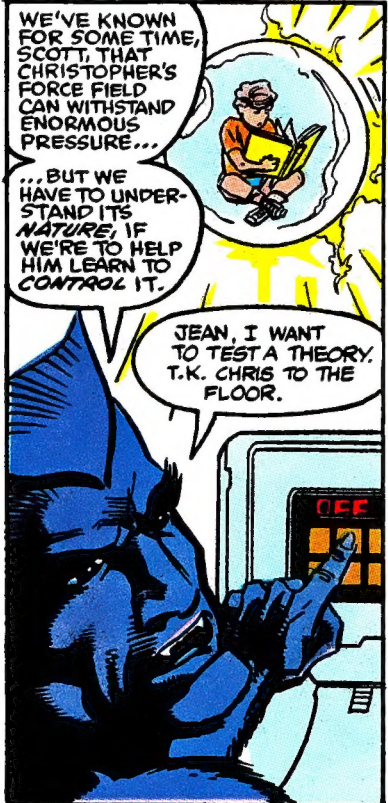
IT'S NERVE-WRACKING TO WATCH, SCOTT, BUT YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT IT'S.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, HANK? IS THAT ENOUGH?

THAT'S FINE, BOBBY. LET'S SHUT DOWN NOW.

AND THE ENERGY PULSES HANK IS FIRING AREN'T EVEN POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TICKLE CHRIS IF HIS FIELD FAILS!

THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME! HE'S ONLY A BABY. WHAT HAPPENS IF HE'S DISTRACTED... AND HE LETS HIS SHIELD UP IN A MOMENT OF DANGER?



WE'VE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME, SCOTT, THAT CHRISTOPHER'S FORCE FIELD CAN WITHSTAND ENORMOUS PRESSURE...

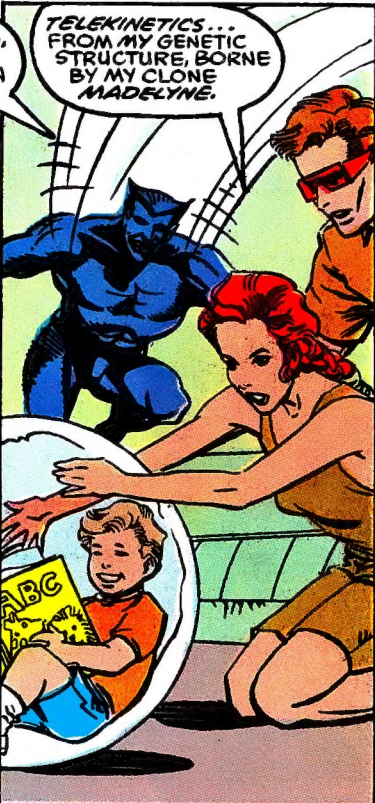
...BUT WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND ITS NATURE, IF WE'RE TO HELP HIM LEARN TO CONTROL IT.

JEAN, I WANT TO TEST A THEORY. T.K. CHRIS TO THE FLOOR.



I CAN'T! HIS FIELD ALWAYS REJECTS MY POWER!

CONSIDERING HIS GENETIC BACKGROUND, I SUSPECT THAT HIS POWER IS BASED ON TELEKINETICS...



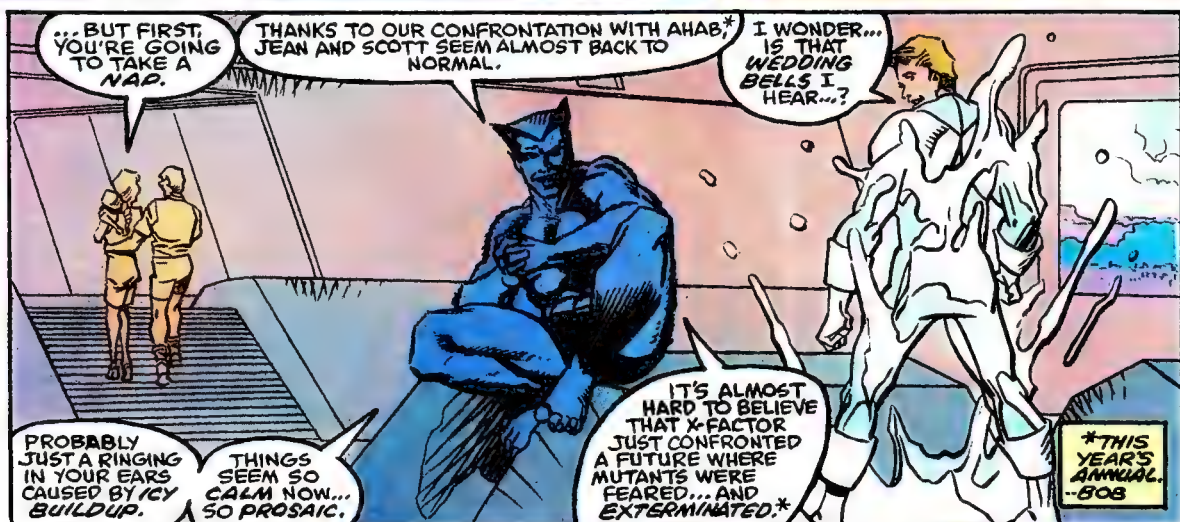
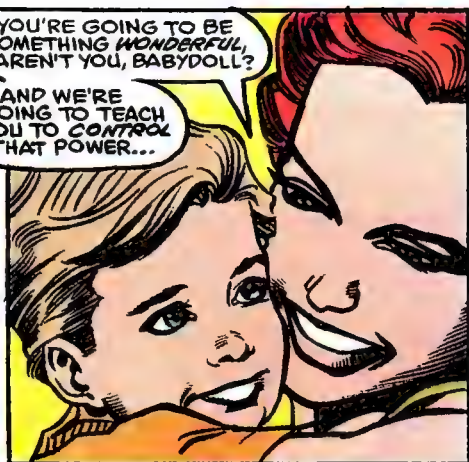
TELEKINETICS... FROM MY GENETIC STRUCTURE, BORNE BY MY CLONE MADELYNE.



THE FACT THAT HIS FIELD REPELS YOURS, JEAN, SUGGESTS IT EVEN MORE STRONGLY.

HE HAS SO MUCH POWER ALREADY. IN TIME, WHAT WILL HE BECOME?

YOU'RE GOING TO BE SOMETHING WONDERFUL, AREN'T YOU, BABYDOLL?
AND WE'RE GOING TO TEACH YOU TO CONTROL THAT POWER...



... BUT FIRST, YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A NAP.

THANKS TO OUR CONFRONTATION WITH AHAB,* I WONDER... IS THAT WEDDING BELLS I HEAR...?

I WONDER... IS THAT WEDDING BELLS I HEAR...?

PROBABLY JUST A RINGING IN YOUR EARS CAUSED BY ICY BUILDUP.

THINGS SEEM SO CALM NOW... SO PROSAIC.

IT'S ALMOST HARD TO BELIEVE THAT X-FACTOR JUST CONFRONTED A FUTURE WHERE MUTANTS WERE FEARED... AND EXTERMINATED.*

THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL... 508



YEAH, BUT ASK YOURSELF, GOOD BUDDY, IS YOUR GIRL-FRIEND TRISH TILBY REALLY TO BLAME FOR WHAT MIGHT MAYBE POSSIBLY SOME-DAY HAPPEN...?



AND IF YOU DECIDE SHE'S NOT...

YOU THINK I OWE HER AN APOLOGY.

YOU SAID IT, PAL, NOT ME.



MUTANTS AND HUMANS CAN COEXIST IN PERFECT HARMONY. AFTER ALL, LOOK AT ME AND OPAL...!

I'M GOING TO TAKE HER ICE-SLEDDING FOR THE FIRST TIME. WISH ME LUCK!



AND IN THE
BABY'S ROOM...

I LOVE LITTLE
CHRISTOPHER
AS MUCH AS IF
I'D BORNE HIM
MYSELF.

I LOVE
SCOTT AND
I WANT TO
MARRY HIM,
BUT CAN'T
-- WOULD
RATHER
DIE THAN
BE TRAPPED...

...IN AN
ENDLESS LOOP OF
MEMORIES
AND EVENTS
CREATED BY
THE PHOENIX/
MADELYNE
CONUNDRUM!

MEMORIES
THAT AREN'T
EVEN *MINE*
ARE DESTROY-
ING MY CHANCE
FOR HAPPY-
NESS.

BUT
DO I
HAVE TO
LET THEM...
DON'T I STILL
HAVE THE RIGHT
TO CHOOSE...?

THE BABY IS DIFFERENT...
A WILD CARD. IN THE
FUTURE AHAH SHOWED
US, HE DOESN'T
EXIST.

DOES THAT
MEAN THAT
THE FUTURE IS
WIDE OPEN,
AFTER ALL?

I LOOK AT
HER FACE. I
KNOW WHAT
SHE'S THINK-
ING. HOW SHE'S
FEELING. I
LOVE HER...
AND I'D RATHER
DIE THAN
LOSE HER.

AND NOW I
KNOW THAT MY
ONE CHANCE NOT
TO LOSE HER IS
TO LET HER GO.



LOOK, JEAN, WHEN
I ASKED YOU TO
MARRY ME, I
DIDN'T MEAN FOR
IT TO MAKE YOU
MISERABLE.



TO MAKE
US *BOTH*
MISERABLE.

HOW ABOUT WE JUST
...FORGET IT.
OKAY? TRY AND
PRETEND I NEVER
OPENED MY BIG
MOUTH.

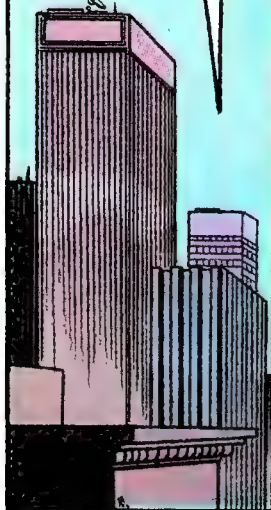
LET'S JUST
GO BACK TO
THE WAY WE
WERE *BE-
FORE*.



ALL RIGHT. WE'LL
TRY. FOR NOW. AND
WHO KNOWS... NEXT
TIME, SCOTT, I
MIGHT BE THE ONE
TO PROPOSE
TO YOU.

MEANWHILE, IN THE EDITING ROOM OF W-ARC TV...

...ARCHANGEL PLUNGED FROM THE CABLE IN A RESCUE ATTEMPT THAT...DARN!



IT STILL DOESN'T WORK, DOES IT? NO MATTER WHAT I SAY, THEY SEE...

...A BLUE HOMICIDAL MANIAC ATTACKING REPORTERS...! NOPE, IT STILL DOESN'T WORK...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT DOESN'T WORK? TRISH...IT WAS GREAT!

YOU DIDN'T STAGE IT...YOU REPORTED IT. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.

GREAT? PAUL, THIS IS A DISTORTION...



COME IN TO MY OFFICE. I HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.

SOON...

WANT SOME COFFEE? STILL TAKING IT BLACK?

YEAH. LOOK, I'M NOT SURE WE SHOULD RUN IT.

WHY NOT? EVERYBODY ELSE WILL HAVE VISUALS BUT OURS ARE THE BEST.

YOU HAVE AN INSTINCT FOR A SHOT, OF COURSE WE'LL RUN IT.



HERE.

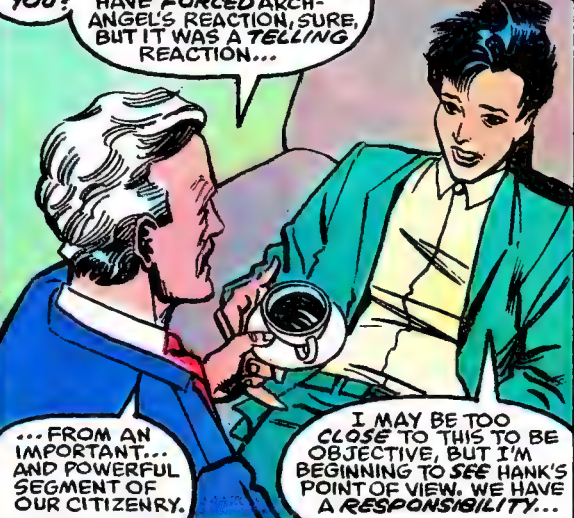
IT'S JUST...OUR VERY PRESENCE CREATED THIS NEWS. IF WE HADN'T BEEN THERE...



PAUL, I HAVE FOURTEEN WEEKS OF VACATION COMING. I NEED TIME OFF. I NEED TO THINK...

TIME OFF, YOU?

LOOK, THE REPORTERS' PRESENCE THERE MAY HAVE FORCED ARCHANGEL'S REACTION, SURE, BUT IT WAS A TELLING REACTION...



...FROM AN IMPORTANT... AND POWERFUL SEGMENT OF OUR CITIZENRY.

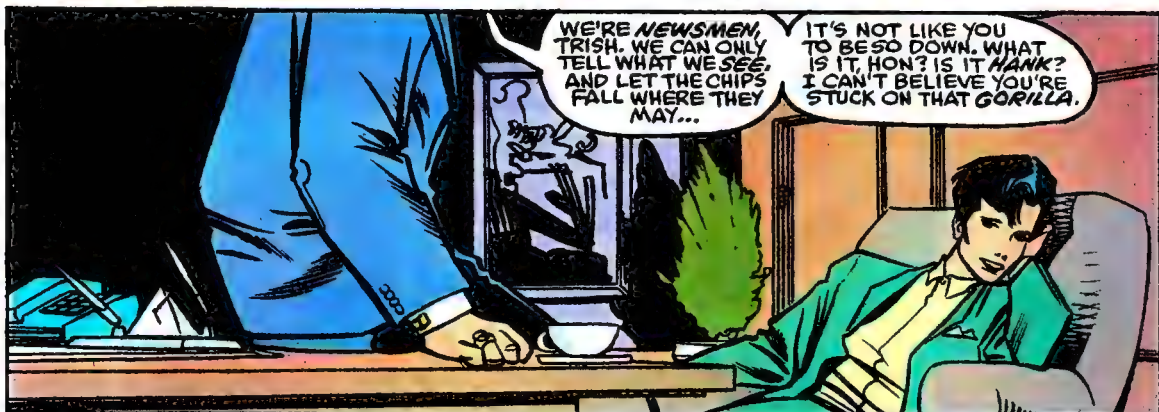
I MAY BE TOO CLOSE TO THIS TO BE OBJECTIVE, BUT I'M BEGINNING TO SEE HANK'S POINT OF VIEW. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY...



TO WHAT? SUPPRESS UNATTRACTIVE TRUTHS?

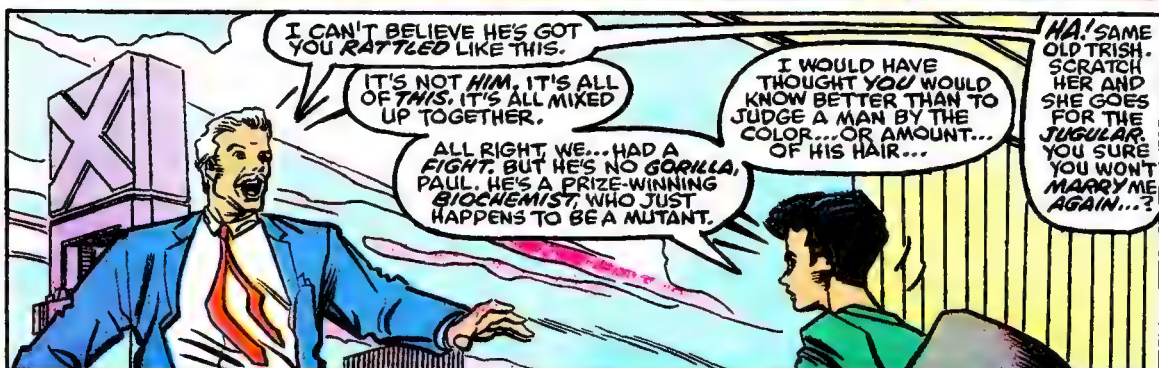
BUT TRUTH IS SO MANY THINGS...

A CO-NUNDRUM THAT WILL BE DEBATED BY PHILOSOPHERS, LONG AFTER WE ARE DEAD.



WE'RE NEWSMEN, TRISH. WE CAN ONLY TELL WHAT WE SEE, AND LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY...

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO BE SO DOWN. WHAT IS IT, HON? IS IT HANK? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STUCK ON THAT GORILLA.



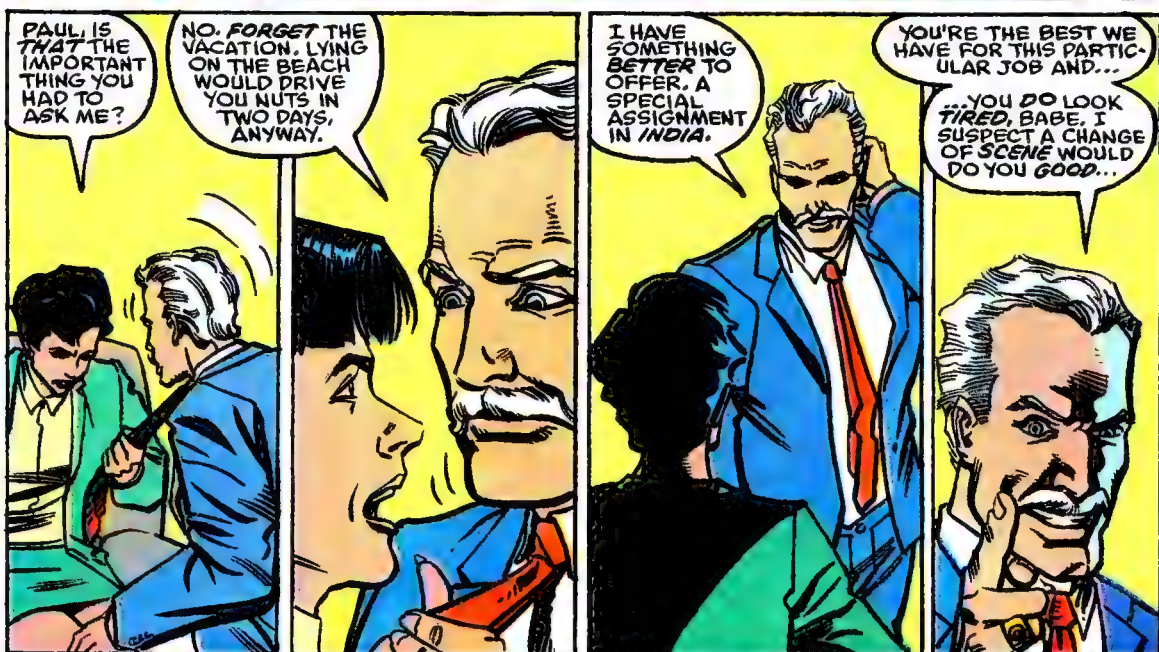
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S GOT YOU RATTLED LIKE THIS.

IT'S NOT HIM. IT'S ALL OF THIS. IT'S ALL MIXED UP TOGETHER.

ALL RIGHT, WE...HAD A FIGHT. BUT HE'S NO GORILLA, PAUL. HE'S A PRIZE-WINNING BIOCHEMIST, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE A MUTANT.

I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO JUDGE A MAN BY THE COLOR...OR AMOUNT...OF HIS HAIR...

HA! SAME OLD TRISH. SCRATCH HER AND SHE GOES FOR THE JUGULAR. YOU SURE YOU WON'T MARRY ME AGAIN...?



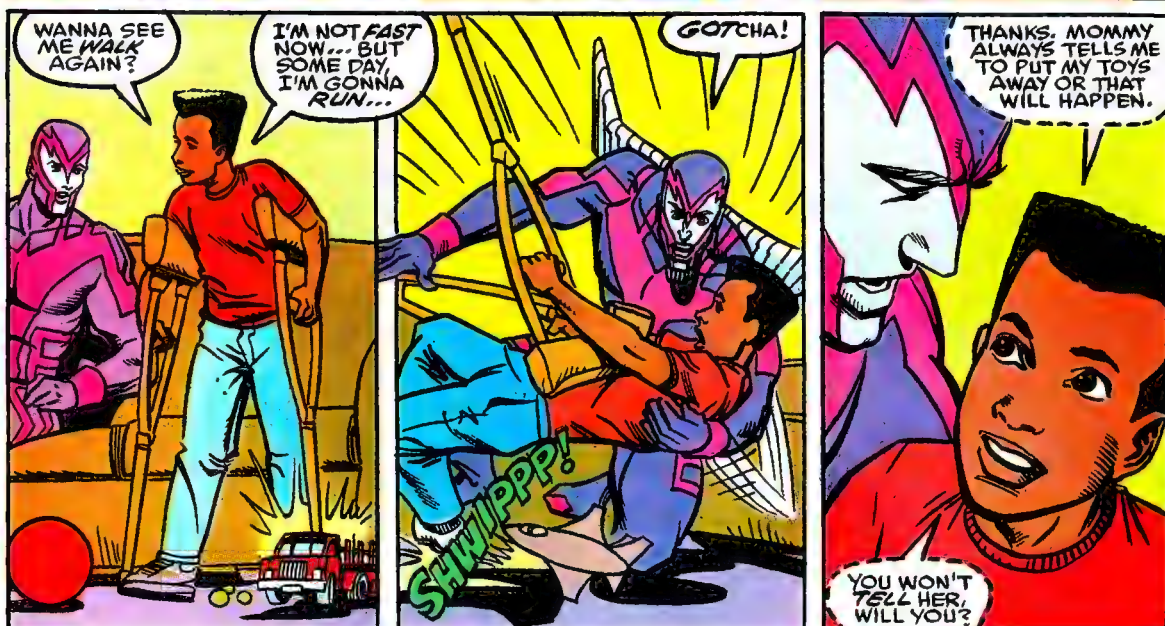
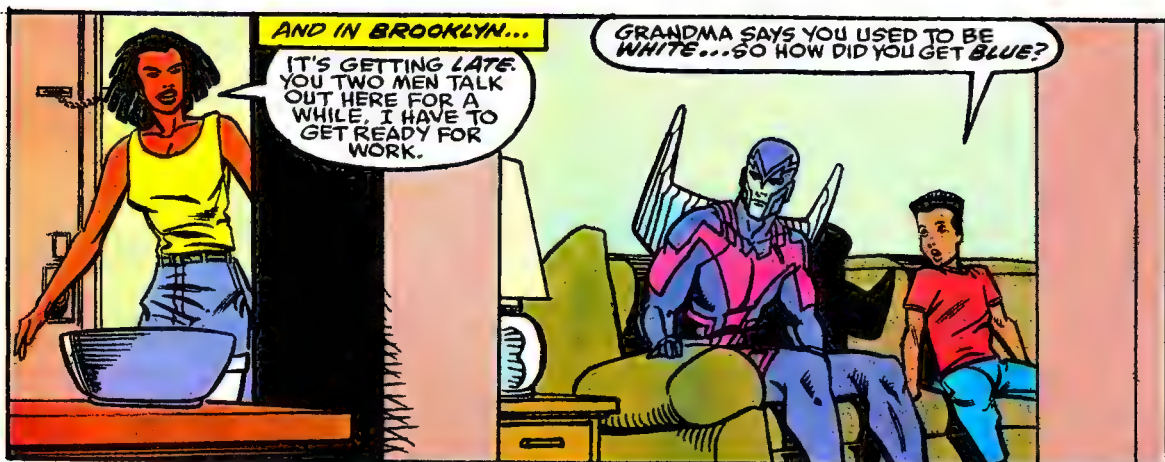
PAUL, IS THAT THE IMPORTANT THING YOU HAD TO ASK ME?

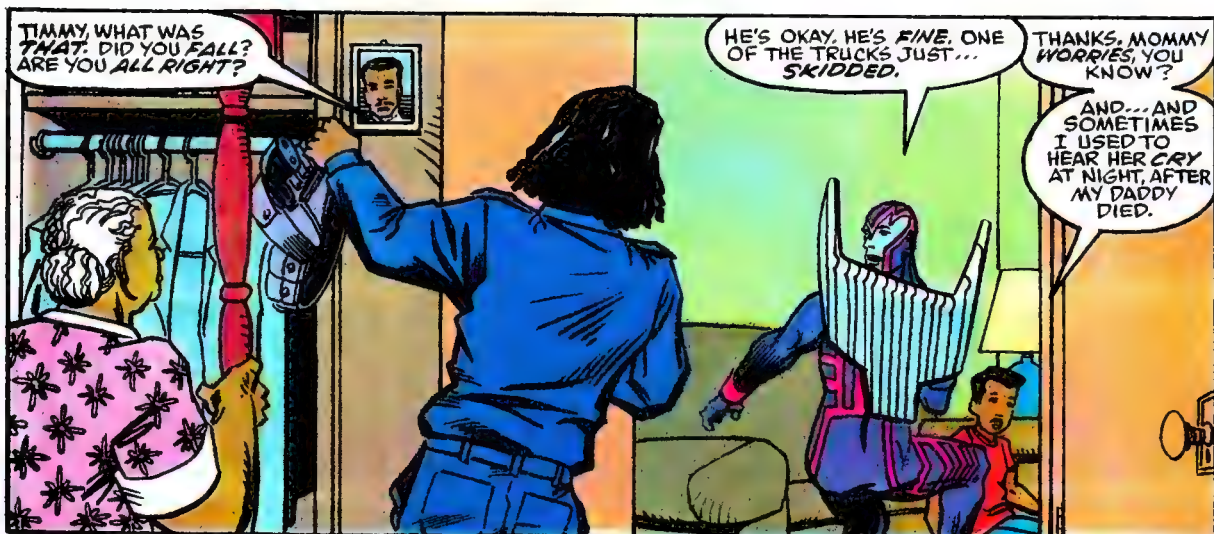
NO. FORGET THE VACATION. LYING ON THE BEACH WOULD DRIVE YOU NUTS IN TWO DAYS, ANYWAY.

I HAVE SOMETHING BETTER TO OFFER. A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT IN INDIA.

YOU'RE THE BEST WE HAVE FOR THIS PARTICULAR JOB AND...

...YOU DO LOOK TIRED, BABE. I SUSPECT A CHANGE OF SCENE WOULD DO YOU GOOD...



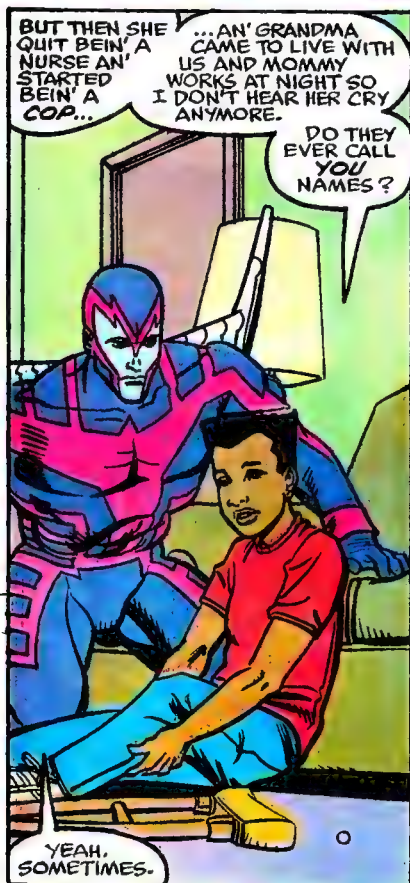


TIMMY, WHAT WAS THAT. DID YOU FALL? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HE'S OKAY, HE'S FINE. ONE OF THE TRUCKS JUST... SKIDDED.

THANKS, MOMMY WORRIES, YOU KNOW?

AND... AND SOMETIMES I USED TO HEAR HER CRY AT NIGHT, AFTER MY DADDY DIED.



BUT THEN SHE QUIT BEIN' A NURSE AN' STARTED BEIN' A COP...

...AN' GRANDMA CAME TO LIVE WITH US AND MOMMY WORKS AT NIGHT SO I DON'T HEAR HER CRY ANYMORE.

DO THEY EVER CALL YOU NAMES?

YEAH, SOMETIMES.

THAT WORRIES MOMMY TOO. SOMETIMES KIDS LOOK AT MY CRUTCHES AND CALL ME CRIP-LEGS.

SOME OF THEM DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND ME. I MAKE THEM FEEL FUNNY, SORTA... SCARED.

BUT SOME PEOPLE GET USED TO ME BEIN' DIFFERENT REAL FAST. SOME PEOPLE DON'T MIND.



NOT EVERYBODY... BUT MOM SAYS THEY'RE THE SPECIAL PEOPLE... AN' THE OTHERS DON'T COUNT.

BUT SHE SAYS GIVE 'EM ALL A CHANCE, 'CAUSE THERE ARE MORE SPECIAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD THAN THE OTHER KIND.



YOUR MOM'S RIGHT. LOOK, MAYBE YOU CAN'T RUN RIGHT NOW...

...BUT IF YOU ASK YOUR MOM, I'LL TAKE YOU OUT WITH ME AND WE COULD FLY...

ME... FLY...? OH, WOW!

MOMMEEEEE!

IT'S DUSK NOW, ALMOST DARK
BENEATH A CLOUDLESS SKY...

THE MOON'S REFLECTING
IN THE WINDOWS OF
ARC'S NEWS BUILDING.

SOME OF THOSE REPORTERS
SEEM TO THINK WE MUTANTS
HAVE NOTHING TO DO BUT SIT
AROUND AND HOWL AT IT AND
I FIT THE PART, DON'T I?

I HATE THE WHOLE
MEDIA *FREAK SHOW*,
AND, LIKE IT OR NOT,
TRISH IS A PART
OF IT.

THE WHOLE
THING PLAYS TO
THE WORST IN
PEOPLE, THE
PART THAT LOOKS
FOR SOMEONE
DIFFERENT...

...TO BLAME
FOR ALL THE ILLS
IN THE WORLD...
SOMEONE TO
HATE.

MUTANTS COULD
EASILY BECOME
THE FOCUS OF
PEOPLE'S FEARS
AGAIN, THE
TARGET OF
THEIR RAGE...

...AND THE FUTURE
WOULD BE UPON US
BEFORE WE KNOW IT
AND DESTROY US
ALL...

ON THE OTHER
HAND, DOES HIDING
PREJUDICE, BY
LOOKING THE OTHER
WAY, MAKE IT GO
AWAY?

WE'RE
DANCING, BLIND-
FOLDED, ON THE
LIP OF THE VOLCANO...
AND IF WE DON'T
KNOW TO BE CARE-
FUL, WE MIGHT ALL
EASILY SLIP AND
FALL IN.

REPORTERS, WHEN
THEY DO THEIR JOBS
RIGHT, NOTICE
THINGS AND SOUND THE
WARNING.

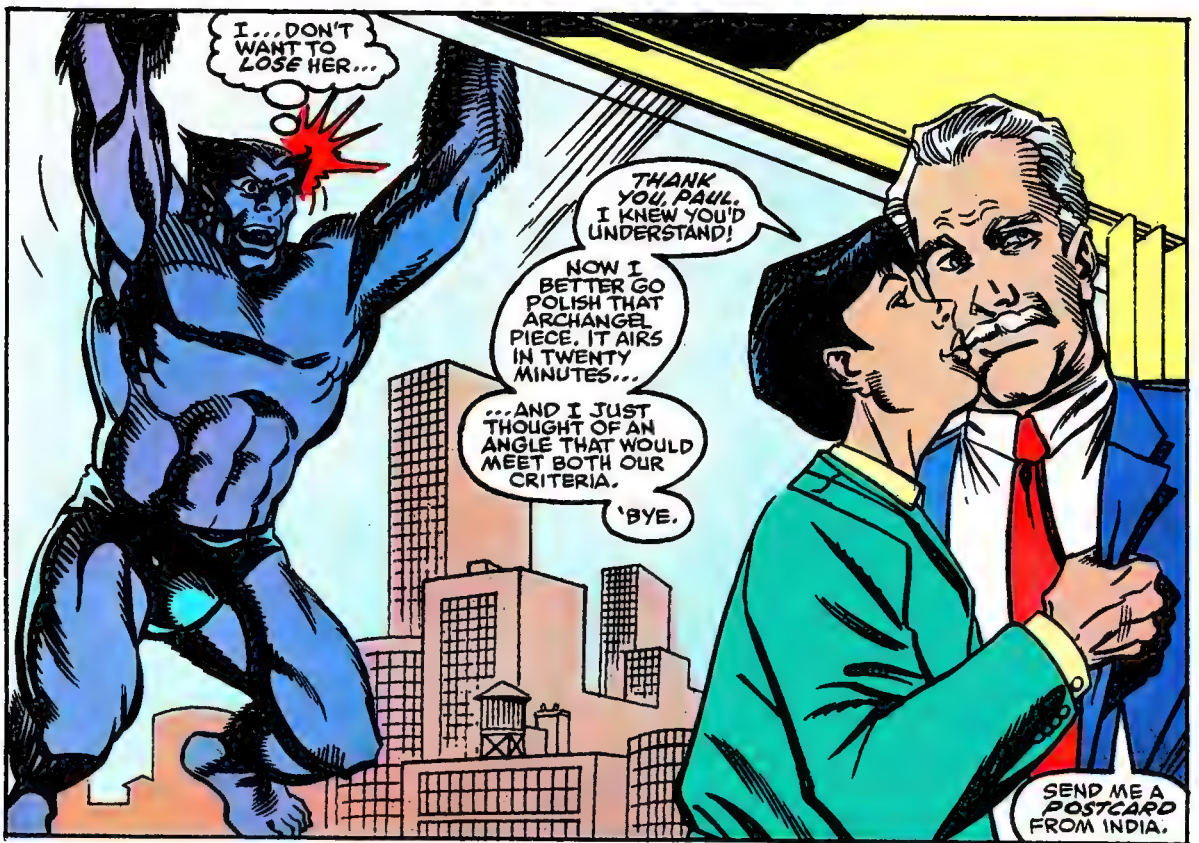
WE NEED
THEM TO
NOSE AROUND
WHERE THEY'RE
NOT WANTED...
TO ASK
QUESTIONS...

...TO DISCOVER
THE SKELETONS IN
SOCIETY'S CLOSETS.
THEY SOUND THE
WARNING WHEN
SOMETHING HAS
GONE WRONG.

TRISH IS IN THERE,
SOMEWHERE, DOING
HER JOB. YEAH,
MUCH AS I HATE
TO ADMIT IT,
BOBBY'S RIGHT.

I OWE
TRISH AN
APOLOGY.

TO CENSOR
THEM WOULD BE
UNTHINKABLE.



I...DON'T WANT TO LOSE HER...

THANK YOU, PAUL. I KNEW YOU'D UNDERSTAND!

NOW I BETTER GO POLISH THAT ARCHANGEL PIECE. IT AIRS IN TWENTY MINUTES...

...AND I JUST THOUGHT OF AN ANGLE THAT WOULD MEET BOTH OUR CRITERIA.

'BYE.

SEND ME A POSTCARD FROM INDIA.



I'LL SEND YOU BETTER THAN THAT...AS YOU WELL KNOW.

IT'S PAUL BURTON, TRISH'S EX-HUSBAND, HEAD OF THE NEWS DEPARTMENT.



SHE KISSED HIM. IT SEEMS SO OBVIOUS, SEEING THEM TOGETHER. SHE STILL CARES FOR HIM.

THEY SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE, HAVE THE SAME GOALS.

IF IT WAS UP TO AHHH, WE MUTANTS WOULD BE THE HEADLINE NEWS EVERY NIGHT.

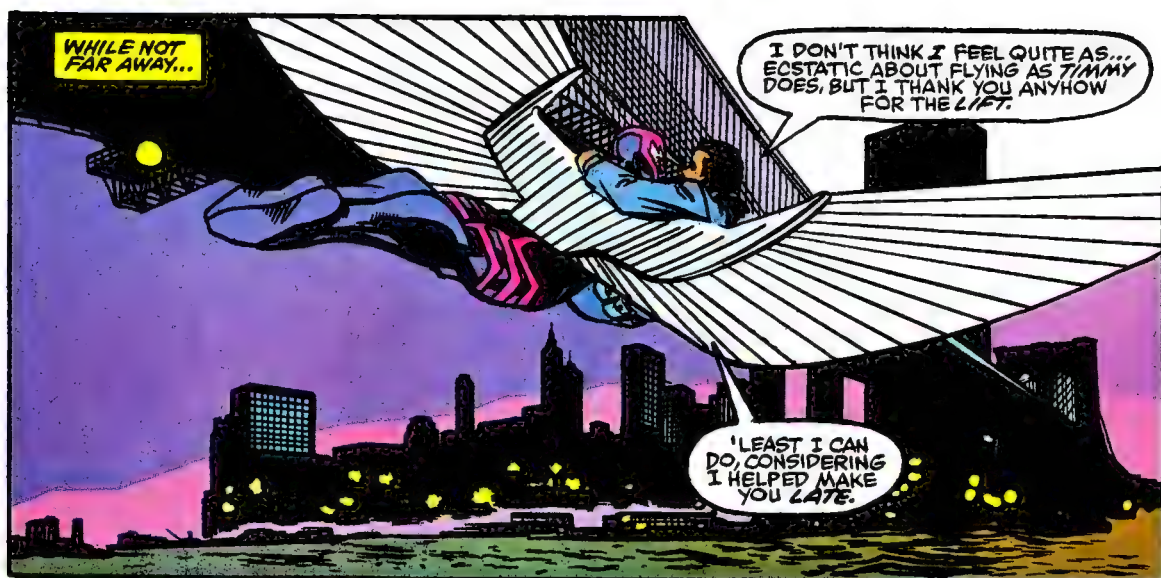


OUR...ANTICS ARE DRAMATIC. THEY SELL ADVERTISING.

THE WHOLE THING STINKS!

AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, HE'S SUCH A HANDSOME DEVIL.

WHAT CHANCE HAVE I GOT WITH TRISH AGAINST HIM?



I DON'T THINK I FEEL QUITE AS... ECSTATIC ABOUT FLYING AS TIMMY DOES, BUT I THANK YOU ANYHOW FOR THE LIFT.

'LEAST I CAN DO, CONSIDERING I HELPED MAKE YOU LATE.

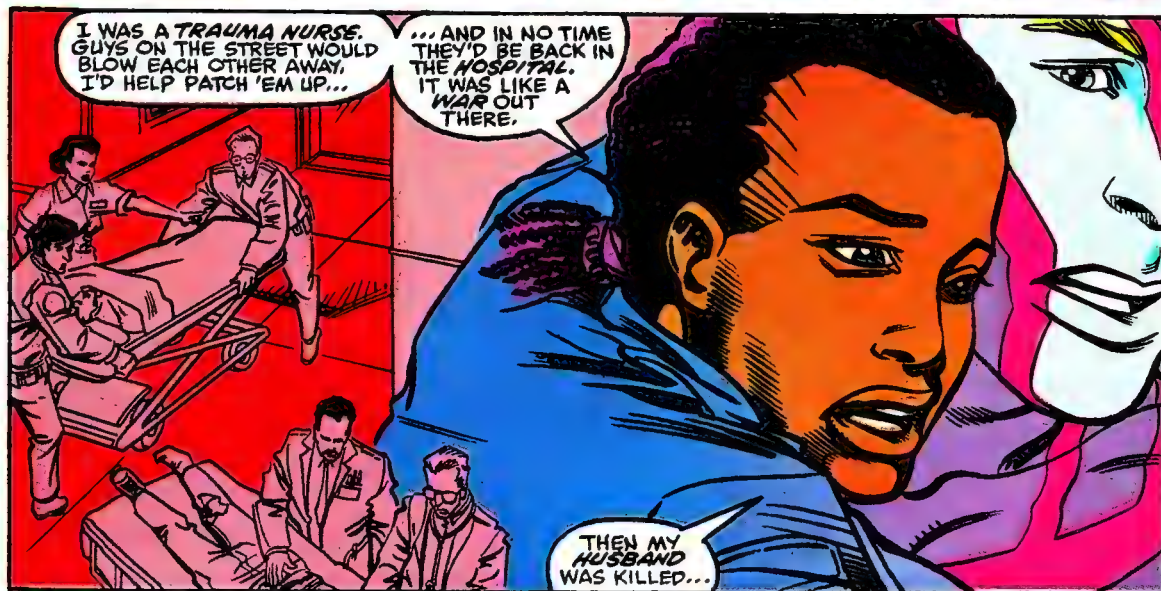


IF I KNOW MY SON, HE'LL TALK ABOUT YOUR VISIT... AND THAT FLIGHT... NON-STOP FOR THE NEXT MONTH.

HE'S A SPECIAL KID. HE SAID YOU USED TO BE A NURSE. WHY'D YOU SWITCH?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE INSIDE MY HEAD. I THOUGHT YOU KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT ME.

SOME OF IT I GOT... BUT MOST OF IT'S GETTING HAZY... FADING LIKE A DREAM.

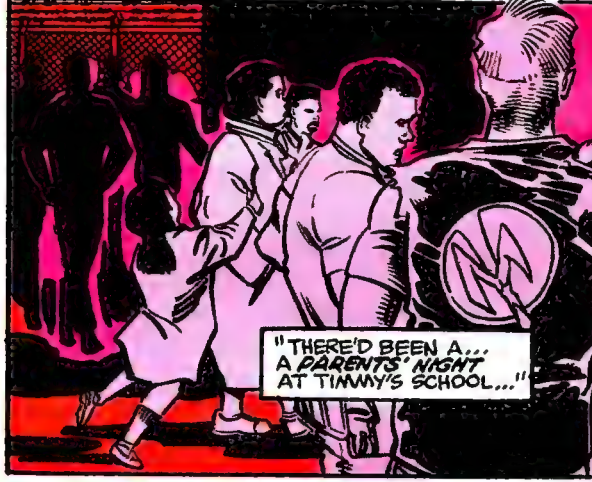


I WAS A TRAUMA NURSE. GUYS ON THE STREET WOULD BLOW EACH OTHER AWAY. I'D HELP PATCH 'EM UP...

...AND IN NO TIME THEY'D BE BACK IN THE HOSPITAL. IT WAS LIKE A WAR OUT THERE.

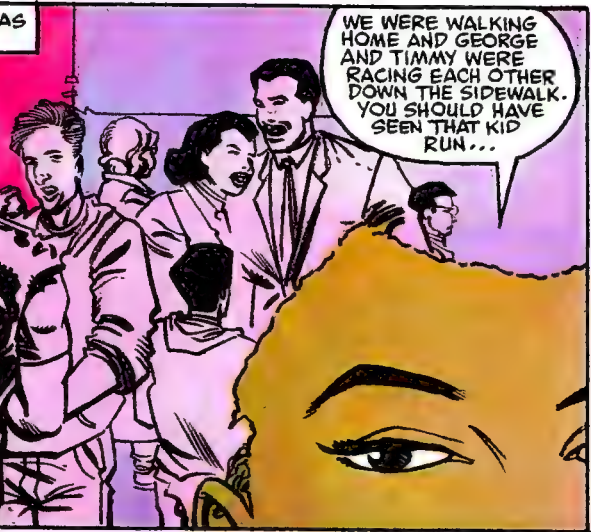
THEN MY HUSBAND WAS KILLED...

"IT WAS SO DUMB THE WAY IT HAPPENED. GEORGE WAS A COP, BUT HE WAS OFF DUTY THAT NIGHT..."



"THERE'D BEEN A... A PARENTS' NIGHT AT TIMMY'S SCHOOL..."

WE WERE WALKING HOME AND GEORGE AND TIMMY WERE RACING EACH OTHER DOWN THE SIDEWALK. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT KID RUN...



"THEN OUT OF NOWHERE, GUYS WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS WERE GUNNING EACH OTHER DOWN... SOME DRUG WAR... AND GEORGE AND TIM WERE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, GEORGE WAS KILLED."

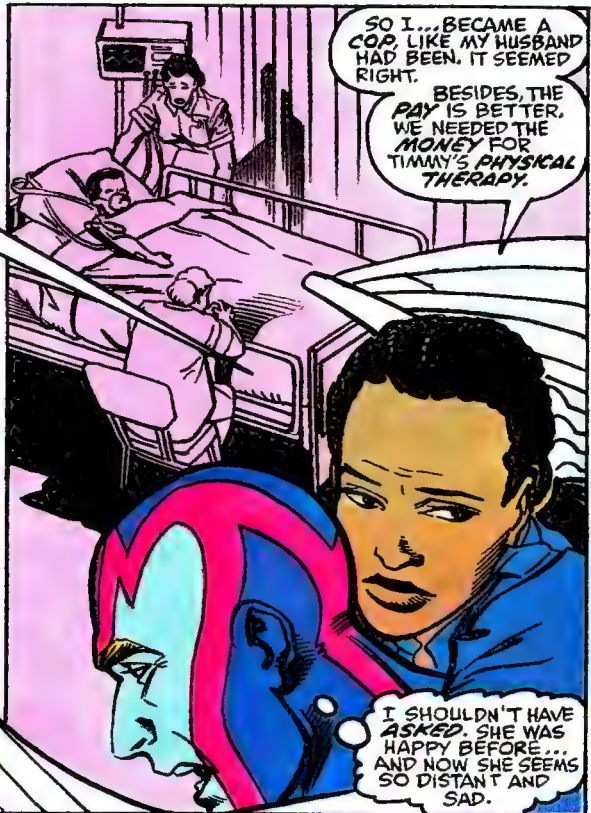
ONE OF THEIR BULLETS NEARLY SEVERED TIMMY'S SPINE.

AFTER THAT I COULDN'T THINK STRAIGHT. MY LIFE WAS SHATTERED. I WAS SICK OF PATCHING UP GOONS. I JUST... WANTED THEM OFF THE STREET.



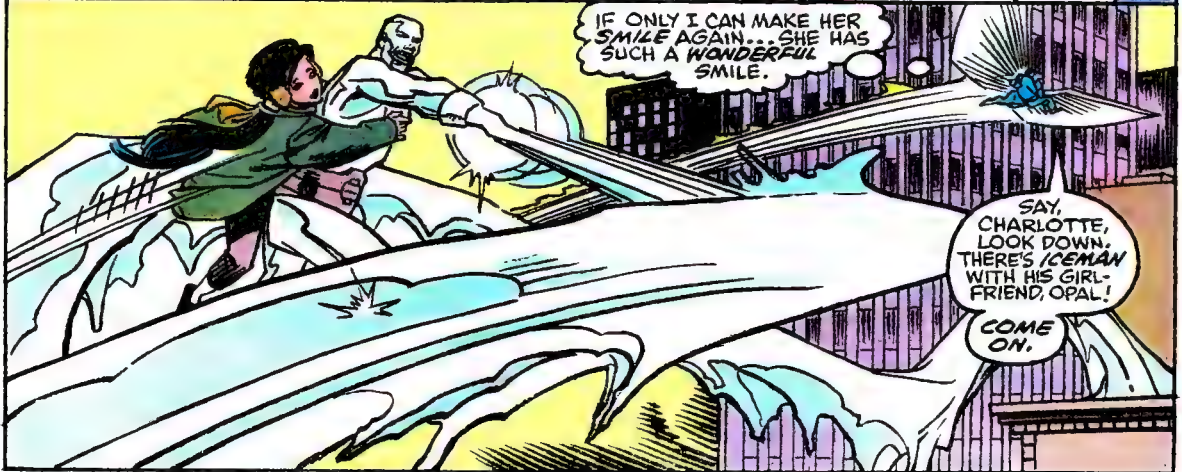
SO I... BECAME A COP, LIKE MY HUSBAND HAD BEEN. IT SEEMED RIGHT.

BESIDES, THE PAY IS BETTER. WE NEEDED THE MONEY FOR TIMMY'S PHYSICAL THERAPY.

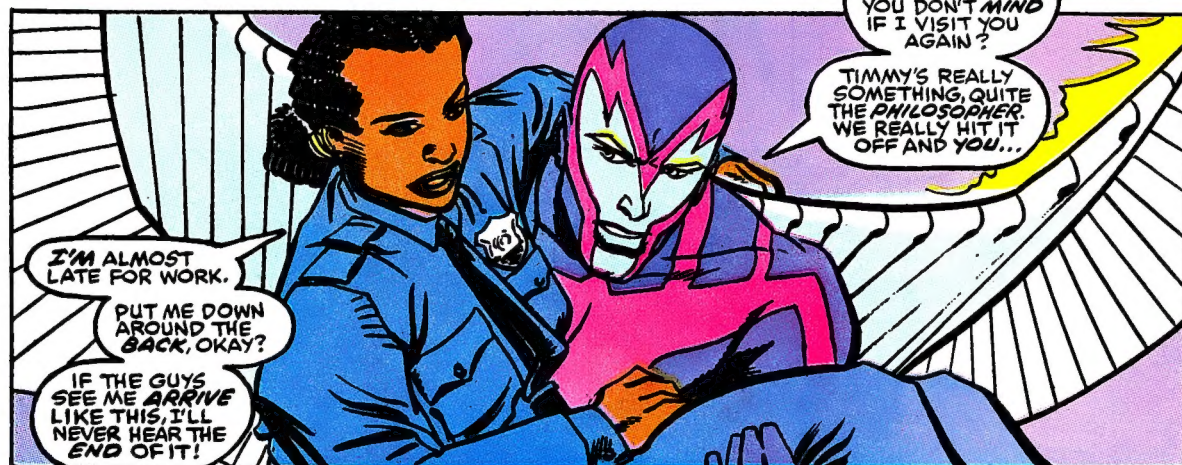
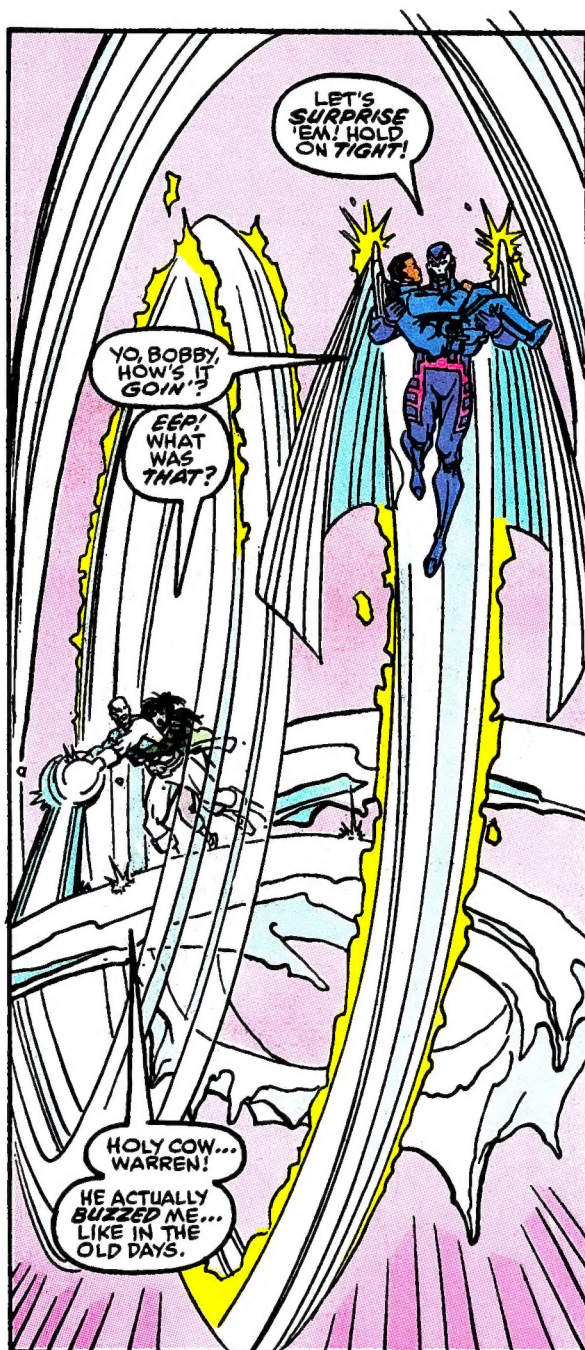


I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED. SHE WAS HAPPY BEFORE... AND NOW SHE SEEMS SO DISTANT AND SAD.

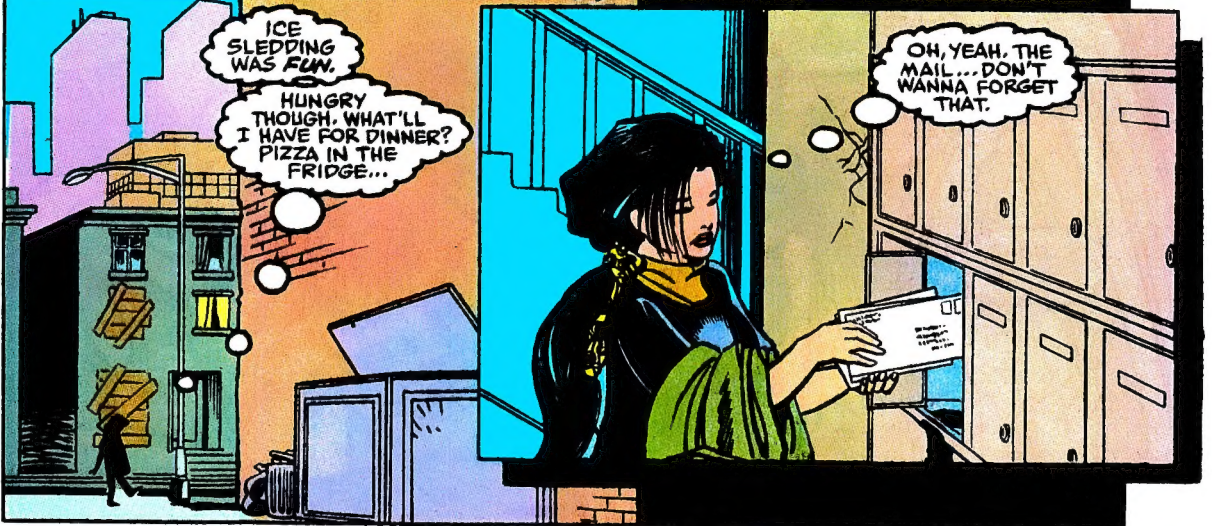
IF ONLY I CAN MAKE HER SMILE AGAIN... SHE HAS SUCH A WONDERFUL SMILE.

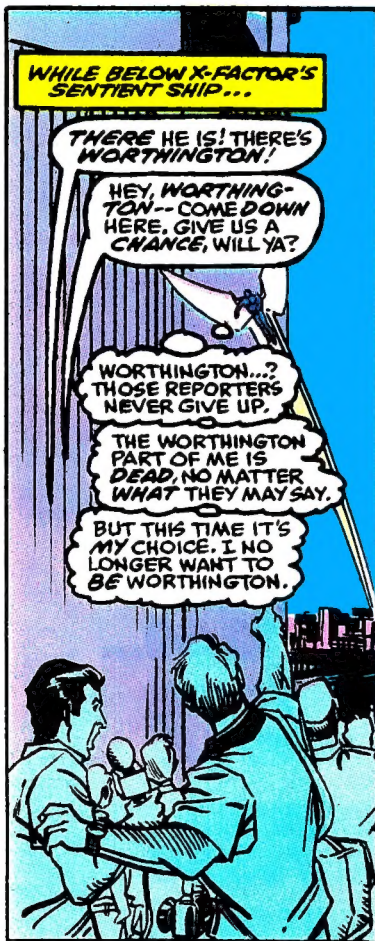


SAY, CHARLOTTE, LOOK DOWN. THERE'S ICEMAN WITH HIS GIRL-FRIEND, OPAL! COME ON.



LATER, NEAR THE BUILDING THAT HOUSES OPAL'S LOFT IN THE TRIBECA SECTION OF MANHATTAN...





WHILE BELOW X-FACTOR'S SENTIENT SHIP...

THERE HE IS! THERE'S WORTHINGTON!

HEY, WORTHINGTON-- COME DOWN HERE, GIVE US A CHANCE, WILL YA?

WORTHINGTON...? THOSE REPORTERS NEVER GIVE UP.

THE WORTHINGTON PART OF ME IS DEAD, NO MATTER WHAT THEY MAY SAY.

BUT THIS TIME IT'S MY CHOICE. I NO LONGER WANT TO BE WORTHINGTON.



IT WAS TOO COMFORTABLE... IT INSULATED ME, BLINDED ME TO A LOT OF LIFE.

IT CUSHIONED ME FROM REALITY.

WORTHINGTON WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH TIMMY...OR CHARLOTTE...!

FUNNY, I DIDN'T TELL HER ANYTHING. WHAT I THINK OF HER, HOW WONDERFUL SHE WAS.

WE TALKED ABOUT ORDINARY THINGS. MAYBE THAT'S WHAT WE NEEDED TO DO. I THINK SHE UNDERSTOOD.



BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO THROW WORTHINGTON OUT ENTIRELY.

AS MRS. JONES WOULD SAY, THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT...

...AND IF WORTHINGTON WAS ANYTHING, HE WAS SMOOTH.



IF HE KNEW ANYTHING, IT WAS HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA.



GENTLEMEN GENTLEMEN... ONE AT A TIME AND I'LL BE GLAD TO ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS...



SO, THE MONSTROUS ARCHANGEL AT LAST IS HAPPY.

HAS REACHED SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SHARP-EDGED, LETHAL, TERRIBLE WINGS

BUT IT WON'T LAST, THAT I SWEAR.



SOON I WILL DESTROY HIM...AS HE DESTROYED ME!

NEXT ISSUE... YOU MUST READ X-MEN #270 AND NEW MUTANTS #95 BEFORE THE SURPRISING RETURN OF ONE OF X-FACTOR'S MOST DEADLY FOES...

IN **BROTHERHOOD--**
Part 3 OF THE **X-TERMINATION AGENDA!**



MINUTEMEN

Bluntman